

Commissioner's Weekly Wrap Up

DCS Communications Office

April 16, 2004

This Week In Central Office

Wednesday, April 14

Commissioner Miller presented the second half of her Sunset hearing presentation to members of the Senate Government Operations committee.

Friday, April 16

Commissioner Miller attended the Family-to-Family neighborhood celebration at City Councilman Joe Brown's office in Memphis.

Later that day, she gave the keynote address of the Tennessee Association for Foster Care 2004 Annual Spring Conference in Memphis.

The Week Ahead

Monday, April 19

Commissioner Miller will be the guest speaker at the Annual Banquet of Administrative Assistants in Murray, Kentucky.

Tuesday, April 20

Commissioner Miller will give the keynote address at the annual Crime Victims' Rights Week ceremony in the children's memorial garden located in Nashville's Centennial Park.



Andrea Walks for Tennessee's Children: A promise in action!

First Lady Andrea Conte this week announced her new statewide initiative to raise awareness and funding for the state's 25 child advocacy centers. Directors of the state's child advocacy centers, local elected officials and law enforcement representatives joined Conte as she unveiled "Andrea Walks for Tennessee's Children," an initiative to raise awareness of child abuse in Tennessee and the work child advocacy centers do to help children who have been victimized.

For more information, and to learn how you can join Andrea and her team, please visit the [official "Andrea Walks" website](#). All DCS employees are encouraged to participate in this exciting (and challenging!) event!

From the Desk of Viola Miller: Attachment – Grief, loss and separation

Note: Over the next few months, the Weekly Wrap Up will feature ten brief essays by Commissioner Miller.

The singularly most damaging thing we ever do to a child is to move them from their home. The second most damaging thing we do is moving them again. The younger the child - the more dangerous the move.

Our first choice should always be not to remove children if there is anyway we can create safety within the current environment. If a child must be moved, the transition should be planned and thoughtful. In emergency removals, this may need to happen quickly, but always happen. It only takes a few minutes to sit down with the child and explain what is happening in words the child can understand.

“I’m so sorry your mom can’t take care of you right now. She loves you and wants to know that you are safe. I will find a safe place for you. I know this is scary, but I’ll be with you. Is there anything you want to ask me?”

If you simply must move a child, the first placement choice should always be someone the child already has a relationship with, preferably a relative. Wherever the child is placed, there should always be a pre-placement visit. At the least, go with the child to see the new place and meet the new

caregiver. Take a tour, look around and leave; Go to your car or somewhere to get a treat; Give the child a chance to talk.

Once the child is safe, if another move must be made, make it quickly and absolutely within the first three months. After that point, the only moves should be for reunification or adoption.

If a relative placement is made, it should be made within the first three months. Once a child has attached to a foster family, he/she should never be moved except as a result of crises or for reunification or adoption. Regardless of the reason, transitions should always be carefully planned and carried out in a manner that minimizes grief and loss for the child.

Please know that I understand how hard and stressful your work is. Also know how grateful I am that you are out there making a difference. I just ask one thing: The next time you are about to move a child, take 30 seconds and ask yourself:

- Is this move absolutely necessary for this child’s safety and well-being?
- What can I do to minimize the trauma to this child that I know a move will cause?
- Is the child’s best interest my only motivation for this move?

Next week’s essay topic: Parents – our very best assets



April 18-24 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week

To view a complete list of statewide events, please visit our [website](#)!



April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

- Looking for statewide Child Abuse Prevention Month events? Check out the new DCS web [homepage](#)!
- Click the following link to review the corresponding press release:
http://www.state.tn.us/youth/news_room/news/April_Release.htm
- Please take advantage of this special month by encouraging your local news media to air or print your local DCS office number or the Central Intake hotline number **(877-237-0004)** when ever possible and to encourage your community to be vigilant in reporting suspected child abuse.
- Also take the time to thank your CPS, Central Intake and SIU staff for all of their hard work and dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of Tennessee's children!

TennHelp.com – Your One-Stop-Resource-Shop!

[TennHelp.com](#) serves Tennessee families and child welfare employees by providing a wealth of the most accurate data and comprehensive resources available on the web ... so let's put it to good use!

You may also access TennHelp.com via the DCS intranet homepage by clicking the "TennHelp" tab at the top of the screen.

Communications Update

- ✓ Congratulations to Commissioner Miller for being featured in *Nashville Post Magazine's* "Power 100" as one of Tennessee's most influential leaders of 2004!
- ✓ Thank you for emailing us your favorite motivational and leadership quotes! Please continue sending them to [Sarah Beth Davis](#)!

-MORE-



Some people only dream of **success** ... others wake up and **work hard at it**.

~ Author Unknown

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT SITUATIONS:

Don't lose your temper; you will lose your point!

Remember you are trying to win an **AGREEMENT**, not an **ARGUMENT**.

Apologize when you are wrong, even on a minor matter.

Don't imply superior knowledge or power.

Acknowledge with grace the significance to the other person's comment or statement of facts.

Know and admit the impact of your demands.

Remember that the ability to separate fact from opinion is the mark of a clear mind and reflects intellectual integrity.

Stay with your point; pursue your objective, but don't devastate.

Don't quibble; say what you mean and mean what you say.

If you want the truth - give it.

Bargain in good faith. Your intellect will tell you when you are bargaining and your conscience will tell you whether you have good faith.

~Author Unknown

Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering **is the soul strengthened**, ambition inspired, and **success achieved**.

~Helen Keller
